

BUDDHISTS LOVE BLACK GOSPEL MUSIC

September 22, 2000 (David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, wayoflife.org, fbns@wayoflife.org) - The New York Times reports that Japanese in Japan and America are expressing a passion for black gospel music (Religion Today, Sept. 19, 2000). Hundreds of Japanese attend a three-hour workshop each Saturday at Memorial Baptist Church in Harlem that is led by black gospel music instructors. The students clap, stomp, sing, and sway, "trying to feel God's spirit." There is also a Japanese community gospel choir in New York City that is performing at black churches and arts festivals. In Japan, people are "rushing to classes, joining choirs, and buying concert tickets for any black gospel artist who visits the country." There is a black gospel singing school in Tokyo and choirs are being formed throughout Japan.

The unusual thing about this is that most of these Japanese are not even professing Christians. Many are Buddhists or Shinto. What they love is not the doctrine of the music but the emotional release. This is one reason we do not believe the typical, jazzed-up black gospel music is spiritual. It appeals to the flesh and to the natural man.

See our book *Contemporary Christian Music Under the Spotlight* for an extensive, up-to-date report on this topic. The catalog is available at the Way of Life web site -- <http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud>